VZCZCXRO4104
PP RUEHDE
DE RUEHDJ #1053 2470859
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 040859Z SEP 06
FM AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7618
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 0182
RUEHKU/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY 0040
RUEHNJ/AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA PRIORITY 0032
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 0942
RUEHTN/AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN PRIORITY 0021
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI PRIORITY 0163
RUEHDU/AMCONSUL DURBAN PRIORITY 0009
RUEHJO/AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG PRIORITY 0029
RHPIGXW/CJTF HOA PRIORITY

UNCLAS DJIBOUTI 001053

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: OREP OTRA PREL DJ
SUBJECT: SENATOR OBAMA MEETS WITH DJIBOUTI'S PRIME MINISTER

¶1. (U) Following visits to South Africa and Kenya, Senator Barack Obama and CODEL visited Djibouti on August 31-September 1. During the visit, the Senator, accompanied by members of CODEL, Admiral Hunt of CJTF-HOA, ChargQ d'Affaires, and Poloff, met with Djiboutian Prime Minister Dileita Mohamed Dileita to discuss U.S.-Djiboutian relations.

¶2. (U) Senator Obama thanked PM Dileita for taking the time meet together on his first visit to Djibouti. The Senator expressed appreciation to Dileita for cooperation between the two countries, and observed that excellent work was being done with the assistance of Combined Joint Task Force in the Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA). The Senator asked for the PM's thoughts on current relations between Djibouti and the United States. Dileita indicated that he knew the Senator was traveling in the region, and was honored to have the Senator visit Djibouti. Dileita said that Djibouti has had close cooperation with the U.S. since September 11, 2001. He characterized the relationship as "increasing." Dileita said that the American presence in Djibouti is much appreciated and he is very proud to see Americans throughout the country doing things like building hospitals, while fighting terrorism at the same time. The PM described Djibouti as strategic and very stable, but faces various problems with the neighboring countries. Dileita said that unrest in the region doesn't allow Djibouti to develop. "We don't have a lot of resources here," he said, "but we have stability and peace." He asked for continued support to keep the stability and peace. Senator Obama affirmed that the United States will help the Djiboutian government remain so.

¶3. (U) The Senator inquired about Djibouti's involvement with Dubai, and indicated that American businesses may be interested in investing in Djibouti as well. The PM encouraged the U.S. to follow Dubai's model of investment. He continued by saying Djibouti's main asset is the port and explained that, with the assistance of Dubai, Djibouti is continuing to develop the Doraleh Port. (NOTE: Doraleh Port was inaugurated in February 2006 by Djiboutian President Ismail Omar Guelleh and former U.S. Ambassador Marguerita Ragsdale. END NOTE) The PM said that Doraleh, with a depth of 20 meters, is the deepest port in the region, and will include a free zone to attract African and Arab businesses for the further development of Djibouti's economy. The PM said Djibouti has historically dealt with Middle Eastern and European businesses, but invited companies from the United States to take part.

¶4. (U) Dileita also mentioned that Djibouti will host the upcoming COMESA Summit, which will include a business forum,

in November 2006. Senator Obama asked whether there has been any outreach to U.S. businesses. Dileita responded that when Djiboutian President Guelleh was in Washington DC, he met with several businesses who were interested in the energy sector. Dileita also mentioned that Kuwait was going to invest USD $4 Billion in Djibouti's energy sector. He said Djibouti was most interested in developing alternate forms of energy due to high costs, and also because Djibouti is surrounded by oil-rich countries who are "stingy." The Senator replied that the United States faces similar problems with energy, and that all nations should look carefully at developing alternate forms of energy supply.

¶5. (U) Senator Obama noted that Djibouti was developing capacity to monitor and control coastal waters and borders with the help of CJTF-HOA. The PM acknowledged that the U.S. presence lends stability to the whole region, and Djibouti desires further cooperation in this matter. The Senator said the United States wants to develop relations with Djibouti in matters other than terrorism, and challenged Djibouti to become a "full partner."

¶6. (U) Senator Obama has cleared on this cable.

BALL